

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

accepting a wager from a player;

presenting a play of a main game including the step of randomly generating and displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;

determining an outcome of said play of the main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;

if said main game hand is a one of the predetermined winning hands, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating a value with the corresponding bonus category; and

receiving—allowing an input from the player at a time after ~~placing the~~ wager ~~determining the outcome of the play of the main game, said allowance of the input being independent of whether said main game hand is a predetermined winning hand, wherein if the input is received, said input causing—causes~~ play of a bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising a random selection of at least one of the bonus categories, and awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with the at least one selected bonus category, ~~wherein said input is independent of whether the winning hand corresponds to any of the plurality of predetermined bonus categories.~~

Claim 2 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said main game comprises a game of video poker and said predetermined winning hands comprise poker hands.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said predetermined bonus categories comprise one or more of said predetermined winning hands.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 which includes automatically initiating said play of the bonus event once a value is associated with each of said predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including multiplying said bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 5 wherein said multiplier comprises a sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 7 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award in the event said score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 8 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 5 including the step of awarding a progressive award if said score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including permitting play of said main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if said wager is of a second amount which exceeds said first amount.

Claim 10 (original): The method in accordance with Claim 1 including the step of funding said bonus award from a portion of said wager.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player;
- (b) displaying a play of a main game, said play of the main game including randomly generating and displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of the play of the main game including comparing the main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if the main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands:
  - (i) awarding the player a winning amount, and
  - (ii) determining if the winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating one of a plurality of values with the corresponding bonus category, wherein said bonus categories include at least one bonus category associated with a value which represents a combination of all of the values associated with the remaining bonus categories; and
- (e) ~~receiving~~allowing an input from the player at a time after placing the ~~wager~~determining the outcome of the play of the main game, said allowance of the input being independent of whether the main game hand is a predetermined winning hand, wherein if said input is received, said input ~~causing~~causes play of a bonus event including:
  - (i) randomly selecting at least one of the bonus categories, and
  - (ii) awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with the at least one selected bonus category.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method of Claim 12, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes automatically initiating said play of the bonus event once a value is associated with each of the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method of Claim 11, which includes multiplying the bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of Claim 15, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of Claim 11, which includes funding the bonus award from a portion of the wager.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) accepting a wager from a player;
- (b) presenting a play of a main game including ~~the step of randomly generating and~~ displaying at least a first set of cards to generate a main game hand;
- (c) determining an outcome of said play of the main game comprising comparing said main game hand to a set of predetermined winning hands;
- (d) if said main game hand is ~~a one of the~~ one of the predetermined winning hands, awarding said player a winning amount and determining if said winning hand corresponds to any corresponding one of a plurality of predetermined bonus categories and, if so, associating a value with the corresponding bonus category; and
- (e) if at least one value is associated with any of the bonus categories:
  - (i) allowing an input from the player, said allowance of the input being independent of whether said main game hand is one of the predetermined winning hands; and
  - (ii) repeating steps (a) to (d) until an the input is received from the player or until at least one value is associated with each of the bonus categories, said input causing play of a bonus event, said play of said bonus event comprising a random selection of at least one of the bonus categories, and awarding a bonus winning according to the value, if any, associated with the at least one selected bonus category.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The method of Claim 21, which includes, after awarding the bonus winning, deleting each of the values, if any, associated with the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, wherein the main game is a game of video poker and the predetermined winning hands are poker hands.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of Claim 23, wherein the predetermined bonus categories include one or more of the predetermined winning hands.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes automatically initiating said play of the bonus event once a value is associated with each of the predetermined bonus categories.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The method of Claim 21, which includes multiplying the bonus winning by a multiplier to generate a score.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, wherein the multiplier is the sum of a roll of two dice.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score meets a predetermined criteria.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of Claim 26, which includes awarding a progressive award if the score is at least one of the highest scores of a group of scores generated during a period of time.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes permitting the player to play the main game if the wager is of a first amount, and permitting play of the main game and the bonus event only if the wager is of a second amount which exceeds the first amount.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The method of Claim 21, which includes funding the bonus award from a portion of the wager.